

January 27, 2009

Department Chair Paul Koch  
Vice Provost and Dean Ladusaw, Undergraduate Education, Workgroup Chair  
Associate Dean McDowell  
Lead Department Manager Rohlf  
Campus Advising Coordinator Sketo-Rosener  
College Provost Shemek, Cowell College  
Student Affairs Advisor Walker

Dear Colleagues:

Re: Workgroup on Undergraduate Academic Advising

As the State's fiscal crisis deepens, with no apparent resolution in the legislature, and the campus responds to resource reductions there will be no doubt be impacts to undergraduate academic advising. In this environment we must find a way to ensure coherent student service across the campus.

I write to ask this implementation group to review past reports and the recommendations on advising and to identify ways of implementing those recommendations that will result in an advising system that effectively supports student success. This is one of many groups that are asked to provide focused input on issues important to the campus, which I believe will help move us towards the goal of ensuring a sustainable campus by aligning our programs and services within the context of significantly fewer state resources.

Specifically I would like to your deliberations to lead to

1. An implementation plan for coordinated campus advising – creating clarity for students, standards for staff and consistency in process.
2. Recommendation for policy on hiring training and evaluating advisors.
3. Simplified/streamlined major declaration process.

Attached is a more detailed description of the questions and outcomes that you should consider. I ask that your initial results be provided to me by February 28, 2009. Once complete, there will be a period of consultation with the Academic Senate and other key campus constituents.

I recognize the daunting nature of this task; defining core functions and how to deliver them most efficiently is critically important. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this effort.

Sincerely,



David S. Kliger  
Campus Provost and  
Executive Vice Chancellor

Attachment

cc: Special Assistant Kittle  
Vice Chancellor Michaels  
Assistant Campus Provost Moreno

<b>Group 2</b>	<b>Undergraduate Academic Advising.</b>
Description	<p>As the campus responds to state resource reductions there will be reductions in FTE to support advising through a number of ways: direct request to reduce advising costs campus wide, divisional reductions that impact advising , and the effects of a potential hiring freeze that could impact one unit or another given the arbitrary vacancy of an advisor in its unit. In this environment we must find a way to help the units who lose advising resources to ensure coherent student service across the campus.</p> <p>For many years the need to improve coordination and consistency within our decentralized approach to undergraduate academic advising has been clear. Progress has been made but it is now necessary that we achieve an integrated approach to academic advising that we can sustain. Critical to this approach is acknowledging the need for facilitating advising across organizational boundaries (academic divisions, colleges, and Student Affairs advising and central support units).</p>
Questions	<p>I ask this <b>implementation</b> group to review past reports and the recommendations on advising and to identify ways of implementing those recommendations that will result in an advising system that effectively supports student success.</p> <p>Specifically, I would like the group to address the barriers to change that have blocked substantive coordination in the past. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Currently local units have sole authority for hiring, training, and evaluating academic advisors and determining the scope of their duties in advising. How can units share those functions with central coordination of advising?</li> <li>- How can we manage the impacts of shifting advising functions between units?</li> <li>- Staff who are considered "advisors" frequently have many other duties in supporting programs or serve other functions than directly supporting student success. How can academic advising roles be managed effectively in these circumstances?</li> <li>- Advising must use available technical support resources (e.g. centralized web presentation, AIS degree audit) strategically and effectively. Departments and colleges vary in their integration of these resources, with negative impacts on students. How can uniformity be achieved in these areas?</li> <li>- The current major declaration process is more complex than comparable processes at other campuses. How can it be simplified to enable departments to tailor (pre-)major advising to their local needs? How can more comprehensive and consistent curriculum planning improve students' ability to pursue their academic plans?</li> <li>- Expectations and support for the role of faculty in academic advising have not been considered for many years. How can we develop an appropriate</li> </ul>

<b>Group 2</b>	<b>Undergraduate Academic Advising.</b>
	<p>role for faculty in academic advising?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What actions can be taken to mitigate the barriers stated above?</li> <li>• Are there other obstacles that would prevent us from moving forward? How can those be mitigated?</li> </ul>
Desired Outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An implementation plan for coordinated campus advising, creating clarity for students, standards for staff and consistency in process.</li> <li>2. Recommendation for policy on hiring, training and evaluating advisors.</li> <li>3. Simplified/streamlined major declaration process.</li> </ol>
Participants	<p>Lead: VPDUE Bill Ladusaw            Department Chair Paul Koch            Associate Dean Charlie McDowell            Lead Department Mgr Dana Rohlf            Campus Advising Coordinator Stacy Sketo-Rosener            College Provost Deanna Shemek            Student Affairs Advisor Joan Walker</p> <p>Staff: Sketo-Rosener, Rohlf, <i>Jessen</i>            Critical Reference Staff: Registrar Office, Preceptors, Academic Department Advisors, Managers &amp; Chairs, Faculty</p>
Timeline	March 1

March 5, 2009

To: VPDUE Bill Ladusaw

Dear Bill,

I've attached the final report from the 2009 Work Group on Undergraduate Advising.

Considering the long-term needs of our advising system in a time of budgetary contraction was, as you acknowledged at our first meeting, a challenge. We realize that many of the recommendations in the report will be unrealistic in the current economic climate, but offer them as possibilities for long-term goals for the campus. We've also suggested some possibilities that could be implemented more immediately.

Due to the short-term nature of our work group, we were unable to consult with all the individuals and groups we would have liked to hear from. We suggest that, should the campus decide to implement our recommendations, further consultation with college provosts, advisers and preceptors, department managers and chairs, and others would be useful as part of this process.

Please let us know when you would like to schedule a closure meeting. We look forward to hearing both your and EVC Kliger's thoughts on these ideas, and hope that they will be useful in working toward a more coordinated advising system.

Sincerely,

Stacey Sketo-Rosener for the members of the Work Group on Undergraduate Advising:

Department Chair Paul Koch, Earth and Planetary Sciences

Associate Dean Charlie McDowell, Baskin School of Engineering

Department Manager and Special Projects Analyst Dana Rohlf, Politics Department and EVC Office

Provost Deanna Shemek, Cowell College

Advising Services Manager Joan Walker, Career Center

Coordinator of Academic Advising Stacey Sketo-Rosener, Division of Undergraduate Education

## **UC Santa Cruz Work Group on Undergraduate Academic Advising, February, 2009**

### **Executive Summary:**

The Work Group on Undergraduate Academic Advising met between January 26 and March 4 to study past recommendations for UCSC's advising system and discuss possibilities for implementing those past recommendations in the context of our current budget climate. We consulted with staff groups including the Council of Academic Preceptors, the Department Managers Group, the Department Advisers Group, the Coalition of Department Advisers, as well as numerous individuals who work in or with the UCSC advising system. We were impressed with the level of creativity we found and suggest that continued consultation with these groups would provide interesting and useful ideas for a smooth implementation process. We were unable to consult with everyone we would have liked during the time available to us, and as this process moves forward we recommend that the campus solicit input from college provosts, department chairs, and other faculty to ensure that as many perspectives and ideas as possible are considered.

Our charge asked us, in addition to identifying the issues that have been barriers to effective change in the past, to specifically address the following issues:

- Coordination of campus advising
- Adviser hiring, training, and evaluation
- Major declaration process.

As we explored each of these issues, the work group found that the greatest barriers that have blocked significant change in the past were the absence of a clear unifying conceptual structure for our advising system, and the difficulties involved in communicating and negotiating change between the large number of advising units on our campus.

To address each of the specific issues in the charge, as well as to support the development of an environment in which the advising system can proactively serve our students going forward, the work group's recommendations are that the campus:

- Develop a practical online roadmap to guide students, faculty, and staff through UCSC advising resources.
- Both improve coordination at the campus level and establish leadership within college advising to improve coherence, consistency, and efficiency in the colleges. We recommend the campus do this by appointing a director of undergraduate advising to supervise all college advisers and work with divisional deans and department advisers to promote coordinated advising among departments, colleges, and the Registrar's Office.
- Establish a Campus Advising Coordinating Council to be led by the coordinator of academic advising (or director of undergraduate advising, if appointed).
- Ask divisional deans to work with departments to identify useful pairings and/or groupings of majors where cross-training and back-up assistance potential exists.
- Establish collaborative processes for hiring advisers, including additional relief advisers that would allow for program expansion to academic departments.
- Develop and implement a campus-wide annual adviser training.
- Simplify the declaration of major process and de-couple it from the academic planning, general education check, and time-to-degree processes.

There are a number of other issues affecting our ability to effectively advise our students that the work group was not able to address within the time frame available to us. The conclusion to this document includes a list of some issues we feel should be considered and addressed centrally as the campus continues to explore ways to better serve our students.

## **Introduction:**

In addition to meeting with a number of campus groups and individuals, the members of the work group reviewed background materials including the sections of the 1994 and 2004 WASC reports that evaluated advising, UCSC Advising Forum notes from as early as 1992, a number of articles published by the National Academic Advising Association, and VPDUE Ladusaw's 2004 report on Academic Advising at UC Santa Cruz.

The background materials gave us an overview of different models for campus advising systems, and we do not at this time suggest a move to a radically different organizational structure. We recommend that UCSC's current dual model of advising be maintained, with colleges serving as generalist advising offices and departments serving as specific program advising resources within a student's major. The dual model is a common and recognized organizational structure within four-year public institutions, and the work group is confident that our dual advising model has the potential to be highly effective given the appropriate centralized support.

Like in other higher education advising systems, our advisers perform three different but related functions: informational (providing students with the information they need to make decisions about their education), supervisory (monitoring compliance with campus policies), and developmental (working with students to clarify their educational goals and develop plans to achieve them).

Each of the groups and individuals we talked with was very clear that the most crucial task of our advising system is to provide students with face-to-face, developmental advising in keeping with the goals of our campus advising mission (see attachment). As our student population grows and as we face the possibility of losing advising FTE in this and future rounds of budget cuts, it is important that we carefully examine the workload issues that can take an adviser's time away from students. Our report contains a number of recommendations that include providing information online, and we would like to clarify in advance that in these instances these recommendations are not designed to replace the work of advisers – they are instead intended to provide advisers with a better method for providing strictly informational advising online, so that the advisers' time can be spent focusing on developmental advising. This developmental work is what our students expect from advisers, and what they need most to realize their academic goals.

We found that progress in each of the specific areas mentioned in our charge has been affected in the past by the same barriers. This report will examine each of these issues in the charge separately, identify the barriers to effective change in the past, and suggest possible avenues to mitigate those barriers.

## **1. Coordination of Campus Advising:**

The campus has made a good deal of progress in the coordination of academic advising in the last few years.

- The creation of two positions dedicated to centralized advising support (coordinator of academic advising and associate registrar for advising) has had a positive impact and has resulted in increased communication between advising units. Both have responsibility to support the advising system; neither, however, has the authority to set requirements or expectations for advising programs on campus, which limits their effectiveness.
- The creation of the Coalition for Department Advisers (CODA) has increased the communication between department advisers on campus and has provided department advisers with an avenue to identify issues of shared concern.
- The First Year Advising program has given colleges and departments an increased ability to work collectively on success strategies for students in their first year, and has clarified the role that college and department advising plays in advising students in the first year.
- An Academic Advising Steering Committee was established from 2005 – 2007, and many good ideas came out of this group. Much of the work of this committee, however, was not implemented because agreement could not be negotiated with all people involved: each college, each department, coordinator of academic advising, Registrar's Office, Admissions Office, etc. (One of the adviser groups we met with as part of the consultative process reported that a committee like this might be more effective if the members were all or mostly people who work with students in an advising capacity.)

Although the campus has made real and significant progress, there is more work to be done to achieve a highly coordinated system. The work group identified two barriers that have significantly impacted our ability to effectively coordinate advising at UCSC:

- 1) Local control and supervision of advising programs on campus results in a variety of missions and goals that are not always clearly unified at a campus-wide level, and
- 2.) Each advising unit must communicate with a wide variety of different units, instead of having a form of representative leadership that would allow them to communicate clearly and definitively with each other to address issues of common concern.

The following illustrate how these barriers work against our ability to effectively coordinate the advising system:

- Because local units have sole authority for hiring and training advisers, many are trained solely from the perspective of the individual unit without an understanding or responsibility to the entire advising system. The lack of a campus-wide training program for new advisers in some instances leads to gaps in understanding within our advising system that affect the way students are served.
- The advising staff is overloaded with work in many units, and decisions about workload priorities are made at the local level based on what works effectively for that college/department/unit procedurally and financially, without the equivalent of an "Environmental Impact Report" on how those decisions will affect the larger advising system. A more coordinated system would include a system for examining how the decisions made by individual units affect the broader advising community's ability to best serve students.
- The process for examining campus-wide policy and procedural changes to achieve better effectiveness is cumbersome because all affected individuals must come to agreement, instead of a smaller group's being empowered to institute change. Presently, each department must communicate with each of the colleges, and each college must communicate with each of the

departments. Each college and department must also communicate with each of the Student Affairs advising units separately.

- Staff turnover in advising positions seems to be high, which partnered with the lengthy hiring process, leads to frequent gaps in the services we are able to offer our students. Our high turnover might partially be due to advisers in some units being classified (and therefore paid) less than comparable positions at other schools or within the UCSC advising system; other competent advising staff may leave due to the lack of opportunity for advancement within the UCSC advising system (few positions exist on campus for advisers to promote into, unless they want to leave the field of advising).

### **Implementation Plan for Coordinated Advising**

The work group's recommendation for more effective coordination of the advising system involves three elements:

1. A stronger conceptual structure for our advising system through an advising roadmap,
2. A more effective communication framework through a clear designation of authority in all branches of the advising system,
3. Workload relief for over-taxed advising offices by cross-training and back-up planning.

#### **1. A Stronger Conceptual Structure**

Each of the advising programs on our campus has developed worthy goals for best serving students at different points in their academic careers. College advising offices have developed a competency timeline for first year advising, each department determines advising goals for different points in the student's academic career, and Student Affairs advising units have developed various models such as the Career Center's four-year planner for students considering careers. Because goals are often determined at the local level and do not always include the larger context of our advising system, however, advisers can at times find themselves duplicating work that is already being done in other units or, worse, working to meet goals that are in opposition to other advising units' goals.

The campus advising mission statement provides an important starting point for determining the appropriate work for advising offices, but does not include a structure to show how each of the elements of our advising system might work together to achieve our larger mission and goals. Different members of the advising community might describe the overall structure and the way they fit into it differently, depending on their individual perspectives, how they were trained, and whether they have worked in more than one office at UCSC.

The development of a four-year advising roadmap for students who enter as frosh, and a two-year advising roadmap for those who enter as transfer students, would help to integrate the goals of our advising programs and establish the role of each advising office within the larger mission of UCSC's advising system. Establishing advising goals and desired learning outcomes for each stage of the student's academic career would allow us to work toward agreed-upon goals and ensure that our developmental advising work with students is effective. The work group recommends that an advising roadmap be developed through a consultative process involving each branch of the advising system, that each advising program utilize it in their planning processes, and that it be regularly examined and changed when appropriate.



As the roadmap is developed it will be important not just to identify how advising units will be responsible for pursuing goals at each stage of the student's progress, but also at what point in the student's educational program faculty advising and mentoring is most appropriate and necessary. The work group felt that the time of affiliation with the major and the time that the student begins considering the connections between their undergraduate education and their future plans would be particularly appropriate times for focused faculty advising, mentoring, and/or guidance.

The work group recommends that the roadmap be made available as an online resource for students, faculty, and staff, and that it be maintained centrally. This would allow us to clarify for students the goals of the advising system, students' responsibilities for making educational decisions along the way, and who their resources are at each step of their educational program. Students who do not have a clear understanding of our advising structure often find themselves being referred from one place to another. This can both give students the impression that the system is disorganized, and can add to workload issues in advising offices. It has also been suggested that many students who need help are lost in the referral process when they do not understand the structure of the system. Our hope is that a clear road map that is broadly publicized and made available would improve this situation.

## 2. Communication Framework:

Many of the barriers to effective coordination could be lowered by improving the process by which advising offices communicate with each other, and by providing members of the advising community an avenue for elevating issues that require campus-wide attention. Toward this end, the work group recommends the establishment of a "Campus Advising Coordinating Council" (recommended in the 1994 WASC review) comprised of designated authorities representing various branches of our advising system. The council's charge would be to maintain a regular communication to address the following core issues:

- What is the work of the advising system?
- Who is doing that work?
- Are we doing that work in the most effective way possible given the resources available to us?

The council's task would not be to make procedures consistent in all programs across campus, nor would it be to find a way to "centralize" the advising system. If given the appropriate authority, however, a coordinating council could help to establish consistency in some key areas that would ultimately improve the way students are served. Those key areas might include:

### Creating coordination of work and clarity on the role of various members of the advising community:

- Develop and maintain the advising roadmap mentioned above, suggest changes to its goals and learning outcomes when needed, and clarify the role of all members of the advising community within it when necessary.
- Identify other pieces of information that could be made available online and supported centrally.
- Explore ways in which the Student Affairs advising units can be more fully integrated into the core of college and department advising.

### Adviser hiring and training:

- Review adviser job descriptions and work toward more consistency in the classification of academic advisers. Consider ways to smooth the process by which departments and colleges hire and train new advisers by establishing central support for the hiring process (this could be similar to the hiring process utilized by the residential staff's hiring of coordinators for residential education, which is described more fully in the next section). If some support for these processes were offered centrally then provosts, senior preceptors, and department managers would not have sole responsibility for running a recruitment at a time of decreased staffing, and advising services to our students would not be so severely impacted during times of staff turnover.
- Maintain a campus-wide online training and resource manual for staff advisers.
- Maintain an annual training for all advisers on campus that would cover informational, relational, and conceptual issues in advising.
- Create and recommend cross-training and cross-assignment possibilities for advisers across different units, based on both local and campus-wide issues and needs.

### Workload issues:

- Identify local and campus-wide procedures that need to be examined for effectiveness and efficiency. Members of the council might address local issues locally, and bring campus-wide issues to the council for discussion and action.
- Create a process for assessing the effectiveness of the work done in advising offices, so that high-workload and low-value work can be changed or eliminated, allowing advisers to focus as much as possible on developmental advising and other high-value tasks.

The work group considered a number of different models for a Coordinating Council, and suggests including the following staff on the council as a long-term goal. We recognize that the creation of new positions during a time when the campus is in a period of budgetary contraction is likely impossible and inappropriate. These ideas are offered, however, as possibilities for creating a highly coordinated advising program in the years to come. In the current economic climate, we suggest that the campus move toward creating these positions incrementally, with the overarching goals being to designate authority in all branches of the system and offer coordination centrally.

- The campus should consider creating a director of undergraduate advising (or alternatively assistant dean of advising) position reporting to the VPDUE. We imagine that the person in this position would supervise the functions and staff of the college advising programs, represent the colleges on the coordinating council, and be conversant in departmental advising issues for the purposes of effecting campus-wide change. Although the coordinator of academic advising position has been effective as an intermediate step, many members of the work group feel that it would serve the campus well to clarify the role of the colleges as a single advising unit and work toward more consistency in the application of policy in this area, as well as designate an authority who is empowered to make decisions on campus-wide advising issues.

If the campus chooses to create this position, the following issues and concerns would require further exploration:

- A concern was raised about the role of the provosts in college advising, if the supervision and evaluation of academic preceptors were to shift to a centralized position. The work group recognizes the value of the close relationship between individual colleges, provosts, and college preceptors and advisers, and we can imagine a number of

collaborative models that would keep the college advising staff closely tied to the faculty, staff, and mission of the individual colleges. One model to consider would be something like that used in the Development Office, where development officers are hired centrally but are deeply embedded in the culture of the units in which they are located. If our recommendation to hire a director of undergraduate advising is implemented, it will be important to explore these issues fully with the provosts and college advising staff.

- Because of the role this position would play in the colleges, it might appear to be embedded in only one branch of the advising system. Should this position be established it will need to be clear that it is a campus-wide position with strong coordinating capacity in order to be effective in working with departments and Student Affairs units as well as the colleges.
- Concern was expressed as to whether the workload involved in both oversight of college preceptors and campus-wide coordination would be manageable for one person. We imagine that the person in this position would need to have authority to delegate a significant number of tasks in order to be effective.
- The Associate Registrar for Advising should be included on the council to represent the Registrar's Office and as a resource to improve the workload efficiencies available to the advising community through AIS.
- One person from each of the divisions/ schools should be designated authority to represent the advising offices in that division on the council. Although our current recommendation does not include that the people in these positions would hold director of advising responsibilities within the division (with the exception of the director of undergraduate student affairs position in the School of Engineering, which already exists), this possibility should be considered once the campus has some experience with the coordinating council and its effectiveness.
- One person from the auxiliary advising units (EOP, STARS, Career Center) should be designated authority to represent those advising offices on the council. Because this is a disparate group, this might require the formation of further structures within that group to ensure that the entirety of the group is represented on the council.
- In addition to and in support of the coordinating council, the campus should designate a staff member for web support of the advising system. This person should report centrally and will be crucial for the development of the online resources that can make advising more effective by moving strictly informational advising from advisers' plates.

If the campus decides to make this move, the following issues will need to be considered in order to make the implementation go smoothly:

- Staff who are members of the coordinating council need to be officially given enough authority to effect change in the advising programs they represent. Because they would be responsible for keeping one eye toward local and the other eye toward campus-wide needs, they would be responsible for both elevating concerns in their area to the coordinating council, as well as ensuring that the advising units in their area are working within the larger mission and goals of the campus advising system.
- The designated authorities in each area need to have a strong working knowledge of campus advising issues. Ideally, they should be either advisers or supervisors of advising programs.
- We imagine that each of the representatives on the coordinating council would spend a percentage of their time serving in this role, and a percentage of time working in their advising or supervisory role. In the future, we imagine that these might be career positions with appropriate classification and salary.

### 3. Workload Relief

Our current system of assigning advisers to groups of students based on their college or major affiliation has many strengths. The ability for students to build a longitudinal relationship with an adviser, the program-based knowledge that a dedicated staff adviser adds to a program, and the institutional memory held by an adviser who has worked in a specific unit for a long period of time are all extremely valuable both to the advising unit as well as the campus at large. This system has a critical downside, however, during times of staff leaves, retirements, or turnover – depending on the number of advisers who work in an advising office, it can leave a large number of students with little or no advising support, and can create terrible stress for the people who are trying to cover the bases while there is no adviser there. Units with two or more advisers have an easier time during these periods because at least there is someone who can continue to advise students (although the level of service will certainly decline based on a different student: adviser ratio) and someone to help hire and train the new adviser when he/she eventually arrives. As a campus, we have a responsibility to ensure that all students have access to both generalist and program-specific advising even during times of decreases in staff FTE and during times of staff turnover.

The work group determined that it will be critical for department advisers to be cross-trained in the advising functions for more than one major within their division. We recommend that the divisional deans be asked to work with the departments to identify useful pairings and/or groupings of majors where cross-training and back-up assistance potential exists. Our campus already has at least one successful model for cross-training and back-up plans within the departments: the Baskin School of Engineering advisers are cross-trained on the 6+ programs in the School of Engineering (although each is considered a “primary” adviser for specific majors/minors). Although we recognize moving to this model will not be easy, we think it is very possible based on experience we already have on our campus, and we recognize that cross-training offers more benefits than simply having a back-up plan.

The college advising programs, because they are responsible for enforcing the same academic senate policies, are largely cross-trained already. The colleges have been successfully utilizing the efforts of two relief advisers who are assigned to the college with the greatest advising need based on either staff leave or turnover or, during times when there is no turnover, based on student: adviser ratios. The colleges’ experience with this position has been beneficial not just in allowing for back-up assistance during difficult staffing turnover times; the relief advisers have also served as a way for colleges to share best practices through the experience of a shared staff member. We recommend that, when resources allow, relief adviser positions be established in the departments as well.

Because the relief adviser positions have been available during difficult staffing times for the colleges, they have not had to rely on advisers from one college filling in at another during times of stress. Envisioning this possibility, however, the college advising staffs three years ago devised a system by which colleges could share efforts during difficult times. The work group recommends that the coordinator of academic advising work with the Council of Preceptors to evaluate, revisit, and formalize this process so that resources can be shared in the unfortunate event of colleges losing staff due to retirements, hiring freezes, etc. If this system proves not to be effective in maintaining comparable staffing levels in different colleges (especially in situations where shortages may be long-term), we recommend that a new process be developed that will allow the larger community of college advising (instead of individual colleges) to

respond to staffing shortages by distributing workload as evenly as possible among college advising staff. If in the future the campus creates a director of undergraduate advising position, we imagine the person in that position will help to manage this process.

As cross-training and back-up possibilities are considered at the divisional level, it is important to acknowledge the vast differences in student: adviser ratios in various majors. The work group discussed the possibility of establishing a baseline student: adviser ratio that the campus might consider as minimally allowable in order for each program to successfully advise its students, but we determined that this would be too difficult because the degree of curricular complexity, the amount of faculty involvement in advising, and the amount of administrative work included in an adviser's job can make such an enormous difference in the number of advising FTE necessary in a program. The work group noted that there are some advising programs on campus that based on their current student: adviser ratio, simply cannot be offering their students the type of advising that our campus Advising Mission Statement suggests. As the possibility of cross training between departments is examined at the divisional level, it will be important to establish expectations for the level of service we are offering our students and then ensure that each program is adequately staffed to meet those expectations. Although the nationwide CAS standards for Academic Advising Programs stop short of defining a ratio to aim for in advising programs, they make it clear that programs must be "...staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish its mission and goals." In order to achieve this, it may be necessary for some of the pairings or groupings identified for cross training to work more collectively on an ongoing basis.

Advisers in the Student Affairs units (the Career Center, EOP, and STARS) are currently doing a good deal of developmental advising in addition to the advising that is offered through the colleges and the departments. As an example, advisers in the Career Center frequently work with students who are planning to go to medical school in planning their curriculum as well as in clarifying their long-term goals. It is important to recognize that any cuts in these units could have a strong detrimental effect on departments' and colleges' ability to serve students, since they have relied on their assistance in meeting students' core advising needs. As possibilities for cross training and workload relief are explored, it will be important to identify ways in which Student Affairs units can help to fill in the gaps.

During the consultative process for this work group, many interesting ideas came from the individuals and groups we talked with for decreasing lower-value workload in order for the advising system to focus on its core mission. Many of these ideas involved improving the online information available to students in order to decrease the amount of informational advising needed in one-on-one sessions with students, and some of these ideas can certainly be implemented soon. It is important to note that two of the groups we met with expressed real concern about the degree progress report (DPR) available through AIS and the ability for students to understand the information it makes available to them. We understand that changes to the DPR are expected that may improve its clarity, but we also caution that as decisions are made about workload issues and tasks for advisers, it will be important to maintain realistic expectations about the value of this resource for students. We also hope that the campus will continue to support improvements to this system that has a great deal of potential for providing students with easily accessible information.

## **2. Recommendation for Policy on Hiring, Training, and Evaluating Advisors**

Our current system of hiring and training advisers in individual units allows a good deal of autonomy for the units in which the advisers will work, but also creates a significant amount of workload for the unit supervisor during a time of decreased staffing. Because each unit writes job descriptions based on local needs, there is little consistency in adviser job descriptions and staff doing very similar jobs may be classified quite differently. We suggest a collaborative model for hiring advisers be used, based on the system currently being utilized in CUHS for the hiring of coordinators of residential education.

We recommend that an adviser hiring committee be established for department positions (and Student Affairs advising units, if they choose to participate), and 3-4 individuals (this group might include department managers and advisers, academic preceptors, coordinator or director of advising, etc.) would serve on this committee for a 1-2 year period. During this period, this group would be responsible for the review of all adviser applications and interviews. The hiring manager might choose to be involved throughout the entire process or simply at the point where the top candidates were determined, according to their choice, and would retain the ultimate decision-making authority. We understand that this process has worked well in CUHS by creating a collaborative process with centralized support, and allows the ultimate hiring decision to continue to reside with the hiring manager. It would also, if the hiring manager chose to be involved only at the end of the process, remove a time-consuming task from his/her plate during a time of decreased staffing so that students might continue to be served by the unit in some way.

If the campus chooses to follow our recommendation of creating a director of undergraduate advising position, then college advisers should be hired through a collaborative process between the director and the provosts. This process will need to be more fully explored should the director position be created. If we do not have a director of undergraduate advising, then a similar process to that described above for departments should take place in the colleges.

The CUHS model involves the use of a common coordinator for residential education job description. The work group discussed the possibility of utilizing a common job description for all adviser hires and was unable to come to a final resolution on this topic. Some felt that, although there would be benefits to developing a common job description, this would be very difficult given that advisers in each department/ division/ college have so many other duties that are particular to their department. The work group suggests that, should a coordinating council be established for advising on campus, that group might take this issue on to further consider this possibility. If a coordinating council is not established, this issue should be referred to another committee for closer examination.

### **Training**

The campus would be served by developing a centralized training program for advisers. Having centralized resources for training advisers would create workload efficiencies, as well as support the campus' common advising goals by supporting advisers' understanding of the "big picture." We recommend that this program be developed and maintained through the Division of Undergraduate Education with the support of the coordinating council, and that it include:

- An online training manual that could be utilized by college, department, and Student Affairs units both during initial training and as an ongoing reference.

- An annual training for all advisers that covers informational, conceptual, and relational issues in advising, and that includes different modules or tracks for new and continuing advisers.

### Evaluation

The work group was not able to substantively consider the issue of job performance evaluation of advisers. Because evaluation is so closely tied in with the issues of hiring and training, we suggest that the group that considers the possibility of a common job description for advisers consider this issue at that time.

### **3. Simplified Declaration of Major Process:**

The current method for declaring a major is cumbersome for students. If the campus wants to move toward a model of students affiliating with a major earlier (we understand that the campus' retention goals might be better served by students' earlier connections with a department), it is in our best interest to make this process easy for students.

Because the current process requires devising a quarter-by-quarter plan for each and every student at the time of affiliation with a department, and because so many of our students wait until the deadline to go through this process, the advising contact that was at one time a very beneficial part of this process has become no more than "filling out a form," and is done at a very busy time for advising offices. Because this is the one time all UCSC students are required to meet with an adviser from their college and their department, it can give students an impression of their advisers that is far from the truth – that they are simply available for required forms and procedures, and not for the developmental advising and face-to-face time that students expect and want from the advising system. The current declaration of major process that requires college advisers to confirm general education status was developed long before students had access to this information online, and it was a useful process at that time. As new technology has made it possible for students to have access to this information on their own, however, the process has become less useful for students in many cases.

With these things in mind, the work group suggests the following changes to the declaration of major process. The goals of these changes are to decrease low-value workload for advisers by eliminating unnecessary and duplicative processes, to create a process that is educationally valuable for students, and to make the process easy enough for students that they might choose to affiliate with a department earlier. If through the process of examining the following recommendations it is determined that those goals will not be met by these changes, we recommend they be examined and changed.

- The student should be allowed to declare a major easily, by working directly with the department.
- The department need not be required to do academic planning with the student at the time of declaration. Departments should set a timeline for developing an academic plan for completion of the major that is published and made clear to the students. Every student should have an academic plan on file prior to the beginning of their third year.
- Time to degree/ EGT issues should take place only once in the process, at the end of the declaration and/or academic planning process.
- Students should be responsible for being aware of their general education requirements and for planning the remainder of their GE courses into their academic plan. As the AIS system evolves and makes the degree progress report easier for students to read, this piece of informational advising should be something that can be accomplished by online methods, freeing college advisers up to do developmental advising with students.
- A system needs to be designed to provide colleges with the information they need about a students' academic plan to support their probationary supervision and disqualification procedures as well as their responsibilities for monitoring time to degree (a conversation will need to take place with colleges to determine their needs and the best way for them to be met).



## **Conclusion**

The work group recognizes the challenges of building a more effective advising system during a time of diminishing resources, and realizes that some of the recommendations in this report would require resources that simply may not be available at this time. We hope, though, that the campus will commit to the overarching goals outlined in the report, even if the longer-term goals may need to be approached in incremental steps.

We also recognize that some of the changes suggested in this report (most specifically changes to the declaration of major process and the recommendation for a director of undergraduate advising) will require significant changes in related policies and procedures. While in the long run these changes may result in decreased workload for advisers, initially these changes will likely increase workload as advisers learn, respond to, and suggest changes to new processes. We hope that the implementation process for these changes will include a broad and consultative process to ensure the smoothest possible implementation.

We also would like to note that, due to the short timeline for our assignment, there were a number of important issues that were left unaddressed. We suggest that the campus provide a structure for examining the following issues that are important to our providing effective advising for our students:

- The work group's focus was mainly on the core advising units of colleges and departments. The role of Student Affairs advising units (Career Center, STARS, EOP) within the overall system deserves closer examination and coordination, as there are many potential benefits to more effectively integrating the advising in these units with that offered through the colleges and departments.
- The role of faculty in our overall advising system should be further addressed. As one possibility, we suggest that a centrally supported effort be undertaken to assist departments in creating the best possibilities for increasing faculty involvement in their advising system.
- The particular difficulties faced by transfer students, and the labor-intensive (and possibly duplicative) processes department advising offices and Admissions must perform in order for transfer students to transition to our campus should be examined closely for efficiency and duplication of effort.
- The review for academic disqualification conducted in the colleges is an extraordinarily time-consuming task that takes advisers away from the larger student population during high-traffic times for advising offices, and there is some concern about the consistency of decisions made between colleges. We recommend that this process be reviewed for effectiveness, consistency, and efficiency.
- This work group was not charged with conducting another study on the advising system. It was noted, however, that as we move forward it will be important to collect data about the outcomes of certain policies and processes that take place in advising offices and whether they are effective.

**Attachment:**

**UC Santa Cruz Campus Advising Mission Statement**

The primary purpose of undergraduate academic advising is to assist students in clarifying their educational goals and in developing academic plans to achieve them at UCSC.

As part of the educational mission of the university, the academic advising program should enable students to become self-directed learners and responsible decision-makers and encourage them to take advantage of available educational opportunities both within the formal curriculum and beyond it.

**Goals**

The ultimate responsibility for making decisions about educational plans and life goals rests with individual students. The university should assist them by:

1. Providing opportunities to clarify their career and life goals and assess their academic strengths and challenges.
2. Providing accurate and relevant information about academic programs and other educational experiences available to them.
3. Informing them of institutional requirements and interpreting institutional policies and procedures relevant to their success.
4. Monitoring their progress toward completion of their academic plans and compliance with institutional expectations of academic standing and progress.
5. Encouraging use of institutional and community services in support of academic success.